

# GLOBAL SURVEY on Education in Emergencies

The Global Survey on Education in Emergencies provides the first comprehensive overview on the numbers of refugee, internally displaced and returnee children and youth who have access to education, the nature of education they receive and the gaps and challenges they face in accessing appropriate and quality education in emergencies.

## Findings from the Global Survey

- ☆ In the ten conflict areas covered by the Global Survey, more than 27 million children and youth affected by armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), were found not to have access to formal education. The vast majority of these (more than 90 percent) are internally displaced within their country of origin.
- ☆ The majority of internally displaced

and refugee children who are in school are enrolled in the early primary grades.

- ☆ While girls are almost as likely as boys to be enrolled in pre-primary and grade one, their enrollment decreases steadily after that. Continued focus on girls' education is required to reach the Education for All (EFA) goal of "eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005."
- ☆ Only six percent of all refugee students are enrolled in secondary education. For IDP youth, even fewer opportunities exist.
- ☆ Adolescents and youth have the least access to formal education. Many have not completed even primary education and so require a range of formal and non-formal education options.

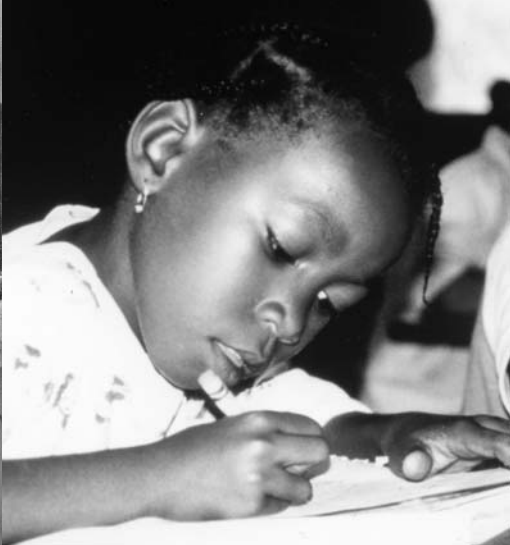
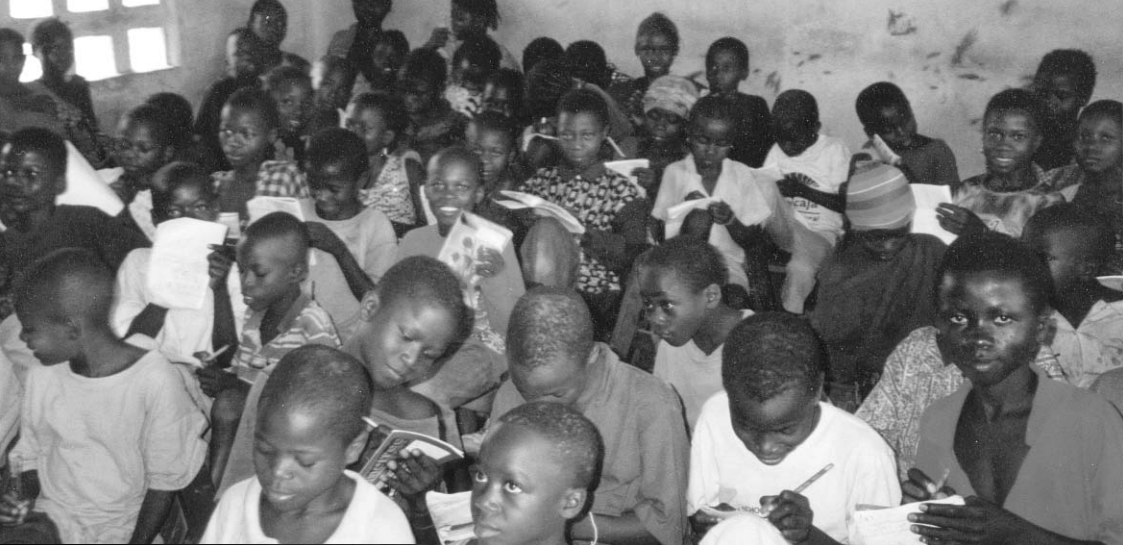
## What is Education in Emergencies?

Wars and natural disasters deny generations the knowledge and opportunities that an education can

Education is not just a good idea in conflict situations, it is an internationally recognized human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Refugee Convention and related Protocols, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

WOMEN'S  
COMMISSION  
for refugee women & children





provide. Education during emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction is a necessity that can be both life-sustaining and life-saving. Education can provide:

- ☆ structure, stability and hope for the future
- ☆ help to heal bad experiences
- ☆ skills-building, information on conflict resolution and peace-building
- ☆ protection against forced recruitment, sexual exploitation and harm
- ☆ critical information for survival, for example, on landmine safety or HIV/AIDS prevention.

Traditionally, education in emergency situations has been seen not as a humanitarian priority, but as a long-term development activity. In recent years, however, awareness has increased of the need for non-formal and formal education programs in emergency situations. Many international organizations and humanitarian practitioners now consider education to be the fifth pillar of humanitarian intervention — in addition to water and sanitation, shelter, health services and food.

Education in emergencies should not be conceptualized solely as primary school for young children. Education includes:

- ☆ structured recreational activities
- ☆ youth centers
- ☆ formal education through the university level

- ☆ vocation or skills training
- ☆ literacy programs
- ☆ accelerated learning programs
- ☆ life skills
- ☆ teacher training

Education should be available to everyone in all situations of conflict, natural disaster and displacement.

### Education in emergencies: problems and gaps

**Gender:** While girls are almost as likely as boys to be enrolled in pre-primary and grade one, their enrollment decreases steadily after that; at the secondary level, enrollment of girls dwindles to about one-third of the total population enrolled. Girls face significant obstacles accessing education. They include:

- ☆ cultural norms that favor education for boys
- ☆ lack of safety on the way to and from and during school
- ☆ traditional care-giving/work roles for girls, e.g., taking care of younger siblings, gathering firewood, cooking
- ☆ lack of funds for school fees, uniforms, books, etc.
- ☆ early/forced marriage
- ☆ lack of sanitary supplies
- ☆ lack of female teachers as role models

**Supplies:** Children need pencils, pens,





exercise books or slates, and textbooks and other reading materials. It is vital to provide these supplies from the start of an emergency and throughout the crisis situation.

**Structures:** Often in situations of conflict and displacement, structures for classrooms do not exist. Classes are overcrowded, desks, benches/chairs, supply cabinets and blackboards may not be available. School buildings are often targets for groups involved in a conflict, or may be appropriated as army barracks or camps for refugees or IDPs.

**Teachers:** Teachers face some of the most difficult circumstances in emergency situations. They are often underpaid or not compensated for their work during emergency situations. Teachers have been targeted and killed in conflicts.

**Post-primary Education:** International attention and funding is largely focused on achieving primary education for all. While a laudable and important goal, post-primary education, especially for displaced populations, has received very little support. Post-primary education can take many forms, including structured recreational activities, youth centers, formal education through the university level, vocation or skills training, literacy programs, accelerated learning programs, life skills and teacher training.

**Curriculum:** In situations of conflict and displacement, particularly for refugees, the curriculum, textbooks and language in the host country may be different than in the

home country. Graduation or passing certificates may not be honored by the home country upon return. In addition to language difficulties, textbooks may describe history in different ways, leading to confusion at best and heightened tension and increased conflict at worst.

**Funding:** Funding for education in emergencies has been a perennial difficulty. In countries where international development aid is present, education is normally viewed as a part of a development portfolio given its long-term nature; however, in emergency situations, development funding is not available and humanitarian funding takes over. Humanitarian budgets often do not include funding, or enough funding, for education unless the funding comes from a specific refugee- or IDP-focused organization.

## Recommendations

- ☆ Donors must create new funding streams to ensure education is available during situations of crisis. Donors must ensure adequate funding for education at the onset of an emergency and throughout the post-conflict reconstruction phase.
- ☆ All local and international actors must ensure that all individuals have access to **quality** and **appropriate** education opportunities at the onset of an emergency and throughout the post-conflict reconstruction phase.
- ☆ Humanitarian organizations, governments and community members must

## Filling the gaps: Who is doing what where?

**A significant number of organizations, from UN agencies to local grass-roots groups, are providing education for children, youth and adults in emergency settings. A list of these groups can be found both in the Global Survey and on the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies website at [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org).**





"In this war, our cattle has been taken by the Janjaweed and we had to flee our land. We had to leave behind all of our possessions. The only thing we could bring with us is what we have in our heads, what we have been taught—our education. Education is the only thing that cannot be taken from us and upon which we can build a better life for our children."

40-year-old Darfurian woman in a refugee camp in Chad.

"Education lies at the center of a viable community, so maintenance of schools during emergencies is an indispensable imperative."

Graça Machel: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children 26 August, 1996. Report of the Secretary-General, UN: NY.



improve their coordination around education.

- ☆ The international community must promote and implement the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction ([www.ineesite.org/standards/MSEE\\_report.pdf](http://www.ineesite.org/standards/MSEE_report.pdf)).

### What the Women's Commission is doing

The Women's Commission, building on information in the Global Survey, is continuing to conduct research and advocacy to meet the educational needs of women, children and youth in refugee and IDP situations. We are focusing on many areas, including:

- ☆ creating a "promising practices" guide on transitions in education systems, so that children, youth and women have the best chance to continue education or engage in productive, appropriate livelihoods when returning home or locally integrating into their host communities;
- ☆ advocating that the UN Millennium Development Goals' policies and programming on education include children, youth and women in refugee and IDP settings;
- ☆ tracking donor-funding streams to ensure that education becomes a mainstream funding line during

emergencies;

- ☆ developing user-friendly tools for displaced communities to utilize in advocating for their right to education in situations of emergency.

For a copy of the full Global Survey report, please visit [www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Ed\\_Emerg.pdf](http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/Ed_Emerg.pdf)

### For more information

For more information on topics covered in this brochure, contact:

The Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies: [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org)

The International Institute for Educational Planning: [www.unesco.org/iiep/](http://www.unesco.org/iiep/)

The International Rescue Committee: [www.theIRC.org](http://www.theIRC.org)

UNICEF: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

UNHCR: [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

International Save the Children Alliance: [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net)

Norwegian Refugee Council: [www.nrc.no/engindex.htm](http://www.nrc.no/engindex.htm)

Refugee Education Trust: [www.r-e-t.com](http://www.r-e-t.com)

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children  
122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168-1289  
212.551.3088 Fax: 212.551.3180  
[wcrwc@womenscommission.org](mailto:wcrwc@womenscommission.org)  
[www.womenscommission.org](http://www.womenscommission.org)

Photo credits: Page 1 top L-R: Khalil Mahshi; Lynne Bethke; Khalil Mahshi; Left column: Ramina Johal. Page 2/3 clockwise from top left: Scott Braunschweig; Elizabeth Walker; Lynne Bethke; Therese McGinn; Sarah Spencer; Diana Quick; Ramina Johal. Page 4: Top: Megan McKenna; Louisa Conrad; Eldrid Midttun; Rachel K. Jones